





## ARAB REGIONAL CENTRE FOR WORLD HERITAGE (ARC-WH) – BAHRAIN

### ANNUAL REPORT 2017

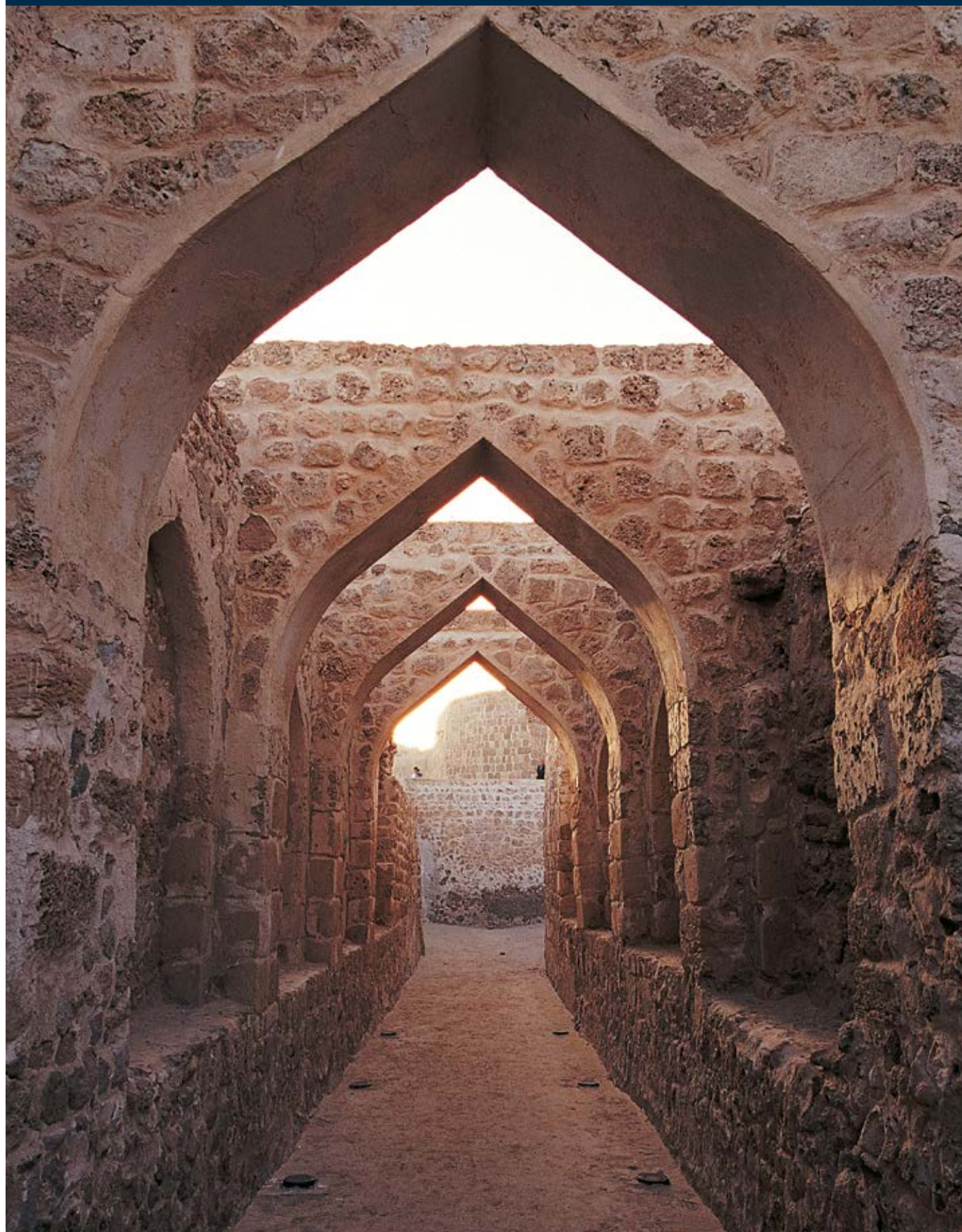


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**“ARC-WH witnessed many milestones and accomplishments in 2017 as it continued to carry out its core missions as per its mandate under the 2010 agreement signed by the Government of Bahrain and UNESCO.”**



*Qal'at al-Bahrain – Ancient Harbour and Capital of Dilmun*

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## PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

## SHEIKHA MAI BINT MOHAMMED AL-KHALIFA

It is with great pleasure to begin the 2017 Annual Report for ARC-WH by expressing my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Bahrain for its decisions to host the Centre for the next upcoming six years. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank UNESCO for renewing its confidence in ARC-WH and enabling the Centre to continue its efforts and position in the Arab region as facilitator of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. ARC-WH witnessed many milestones and accomplishments in 2017 as it continued to carry out its core missions as per its mandate under the 2010 agreement signed by the Government of Bahrain and UNESCO.

Over the past year, the Centre intensified and strengthened its efforts in earnest to provide Arab States Parties and regional and international stakeholders with the utmost technical and financial support in order to preserve the unique natural and cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List.

To respond to the many challenges and changes faced by Arab region,

ARC-WH invited professionals and technical heritage experts in the field of conservation to attend and participate in capacity building workshops, panel discussions and meetings.

These specialized workshops and seminars enhanced the knowledge and skillsets of participants and provided them with the necessary tools needed to effectively implement and apply the provisions and policies of the 1972 Convention, with the participation of the Centre's key partners from UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and UNESCO's Advisory Bodies, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN.

With the turning point of ARC-WH, the Centre embarked upon developing its communication and media channels, documentation and information dissemination, and preparation of studies and research to support its technical activities to increase the awareness of heritage and its importance in the region.

At the end of 2017, the Kingdom of Bahrain continued to show its support to ARC-WH's work, particularly following Bahrain's re-election as member of the World Heritage Committee, and in light of the fact that Bahrain will be chairing the 42nd World Heritage Committee in 2018.

We look forward to more successes and achievements in the coming years.

### Sheikha Mai bint Mohammed Al-Khalifa

Chairperson of the Governing Board of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage



**“By the end of the year 2017; ARC-WH was already looking forward to building on its previous accomplishments and achievements and embarked on the preparation of its new Action Plan for 2018.”**



Medina of Tunis  
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## FORWARD FROM THE DIRECTOR

## DR. SHADIA TOUQAN

It is my pleasure to report on the year 2017, a year of major challenges, high expectations and significant achievements for ARC-WH.

As I started my first year working at the Centre with an outstanding team who are extremely qualified and highly trained professionals, dedicated to the protection of heritage in the Arab Region, threats and disasters continued to ravish many Arab cities and sites causing, in many cases, irreparable damage to sites that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Furthermore, due to the prevailing conditions in the region, many of these threatened sites continue to be inaccessible to international organizations to enable assessment of the conditions and ability to offer technical and humanitarian assistance.

However, ARC-WH team endeavoured to implement its Action Plan for the year, where and when possible, as it was endorsed by the Governing Board in February 2017, and in line with its mandate. The Plan focused on offering training and capacity building for professionals of State Parties in the Arab region and assisting them in the implementation of the 1972 Convention.

From helping with revising Tentative Lists to providing support in the understanding of technical and complex issues needed for preparation of nomination files, or post inscription management plans and state of conservation reports, the team expanded and consolidated its intervention to cover wider geographical area in the region and promote cooperation with more stakeholders in various Arab countries.

The year 2017 was also the year when ARC-WH focused on the development and expansion of the Centre's visibility through its enhanced communication policy including creating a new ARC-WH brand, launching of a revamped and modernized website, while intensifying the use of social media.

ARC-WH Team started the year in earnest aiming to develop the existing library into an Information Hub, providing updated information and digital reading materials and data about World Heritage sites in the region and providing links to other international digital libraries in cooperation with our partners and associates in the field, thereby offering professionals, scholars, researchers and students in the field of cultural and natural heritage, valuable and reliable sources of information.

While the Team's workload increased and the Centre's interventions expanded, the structural organization and administrative and management systems needed to be reviewed and refocused to facilitate more efficient implementation to enable the team to enhance its performance, meet the new challenges and fulfil its steadily increasing obligations.

Therefore, as ARC-WH was getting ready for a new phase, it was recognized early in the year that a new strategy for the Centre needed to be developed to encompass the cultural strategy and revise its natural strategy, while taking into consideration and responding to the evolving linkages between the natural and cultural heritage. Thus two separate workshops were organized and conducted to discuss and develop a general Strategy for the Centre, followed by more focused workshop for the Centre's cultural heritage strategy. The strategies were developed with the participation of ARC-WH main partners, WHC, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN in addition to a number of regional and international experts.

Over the past year, the Centre strengthened its professional networks, developed new partnerships, extended existing agreements and participated in a number of international events and meetings that dealt with the current challenges and needs of Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites in the region, ARC-WH also initiated a Resource

Development strategy to further the Centre's financial resources.

With the ongoing devastating consequences of the military and political conflicts in the region, as well as natural disasters, ARC-WH pursued activities and projects in various areas by developing a dynamic approach based on the priorities within the possible accessibility which varied in complexity in each area, and allowed for more inclusion despite the restrictions. Moreover, the Team, with its accumulated experience and knowledge of the regions needs and priorities, identified gaps and shortages in the methods and mechanisms available in the region for implementation of its mandate as a Category 2 Centre and embarked upon discussions with its main partners and Advisory Bodies to address these issues.

By the end of the year 2017; ARC-WH was already looking forward to building on its previous accomplishments and achievements and embarked on the preparation of its new Action Plan for 2018; responding to the changing and challenging conditions in the region through a realistic and dynamic approach.

It is worthy to note that ARC-WH would not have been able to achieve its objectives, develop its abilities and fulfil its obligations without the continued guidance and encouragement of the Arab Regional Centre from H.E. Sheikha Mai Al- Khalifa, the Chairperson of the Governing Board. I would also like to express our appreciation to the support of our partners, WHC and all the members of our Governing Board.

**Dr. Shadia Touqan**

Director of the Arab Regional Centre  
for World Heritage



## PREFACE

## ARC-WH TEAM

We aim to be a leading organisation concerning cultural and natural heritage protection, for the benefit of both the Arab States and the wider world, providing the knowledge and technical assistance to effectively implement the World Heritage Convention in the Arab region.

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
WORLD HERITAGE  
PROPERTIES  
WORLDWIDE

1073  
SITES



## BACKGROUND

To strengthen the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Arab States by providing information, knowledge, and advice to Member States and facilitating coordination and cooperation among stakeholders at the international, national and local levels of the World Heritage system, for the benefit of World Heritage sites in the region.

The World Heritage Convention stipulates in its Article 5, that in order: “To ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, each State Party to this Convention shall endeavour, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field.”



# OBJECTIVES

The Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) is a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO. It was established by the Kingdom of Bahrain as an autonomous and independent legal entity at the service of Arab Member States to strengthen the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the region.

The main objective of the ARC-WH is to support efforts of Member States to achieve a credible and balanced representation of the region’s cultural and natural heritage on the World Heritage List, promote better protection and management of such World Heritage properties, mobilise regional and international financial support for these purposes, and raise awareness of World Heritage in the region.

# OUR PROGRAMMES

## OUR PROGRAMMES

ARC-WH programmes are implemented on different levels including: regional, national and local levels. The programme is designed to meet the region needs which has been previously defined through the second periodic cycle reporting of the Arab Region, and in lined with the strategic objectives of the World Heritage Convention Five Cs ( Community, Credibility, Conservation, Communication and Capacity building).

## CULTURAL HERITAGE PROGRAMME

The Cultural Heritage Programme (2018-2022) builds on ARC-WH’s Strategic Plan for the same period and is therefore designed to implement its overall strategic objectives and respond to the particular needs of the cultural heritage field. The programme lays out the main outcomes that the ARC-WH seek to achieve across three programme components:

- Strengthening capacity to identify, protect and manage World Heritage properties in the region
- Responding more systematically to the specific needs of protecting cultural heritage in the region, by focusing in particular on certain priority areas;
- Building expertise to protect and manage cultural World Heritage.

## TABE’A- THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ARAB NATURAL WORLD HERITAGE

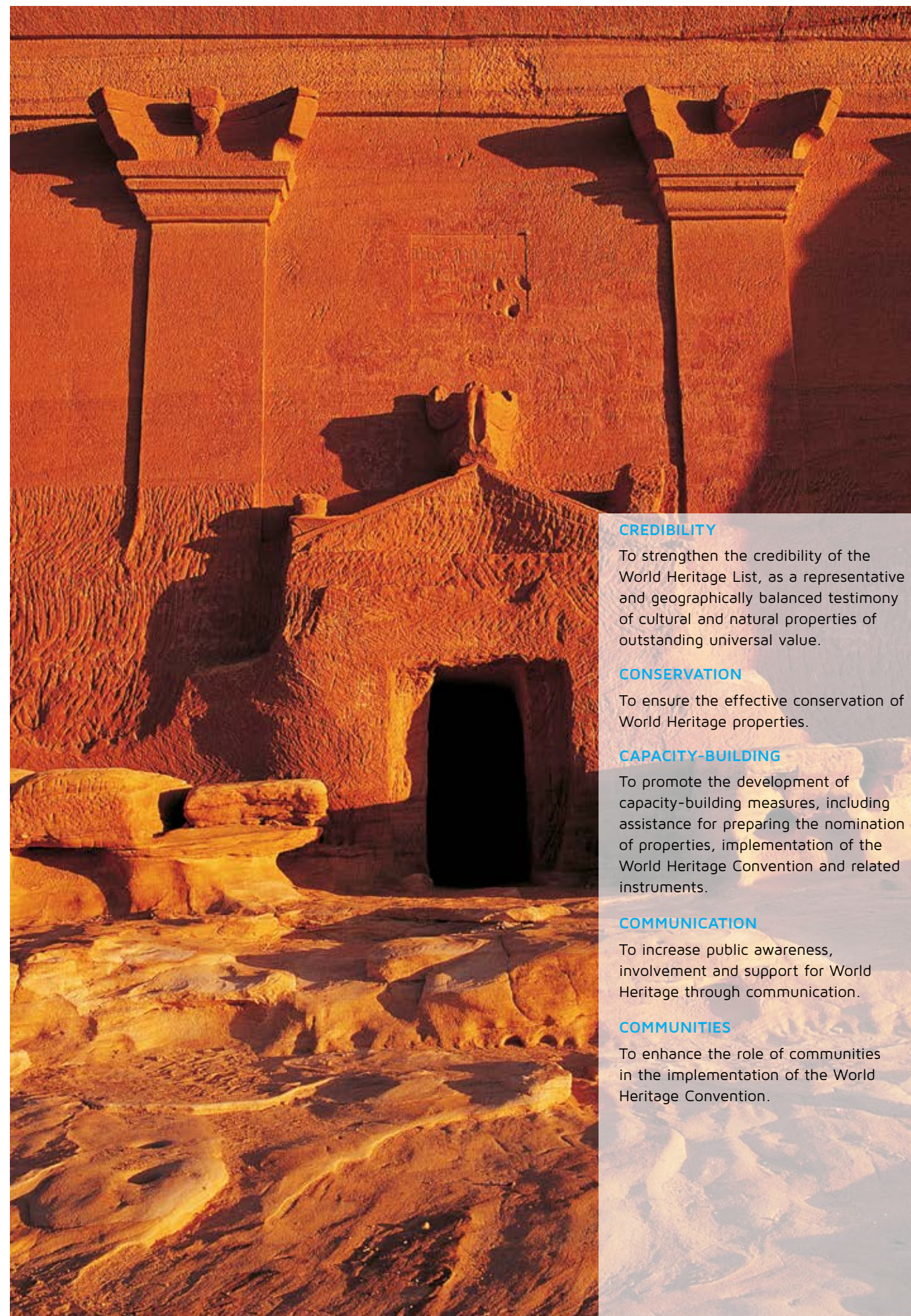
TABE’A programme (TABE’A – which means nature in Arabic) is the regional programme for natural World Heritage for the Arab States Region. The programme was launched by IUCN in 2008 in response to the pressing regional need to enhance the Natural Heritage conservation in the Arab Region which is under-represented on the World Heritage List.

The programme was managed by the IUCN World Heritage Programme until 2013, IUCN signed a new cooperation agreement with the UNESCO Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage in Bahrain (ARC-WH). The programme is currently hosted in the ARC-WH and is implemented in close coordination with IUCN World Heritage Programme.

The TABE’A programme, as a tailored regional initiative, was very successful in triggering such motivation and using it in achieving global targets represented by the establishment of a representative and sustained World Heritage Network from the region which contributes to the global map while at the same time working to ensure that such a network of regional World Heritage sites is effectively managed and continuously monitored through sound regional capacities and progressing collaboration frameworks.



## THE FIVE “CS”

STRATEGIC  
OBJECTIVES  
OF THE WORLD  
HERITAGE CONVENTIONCREDIBILITY  
CONSERVATION  
CAPACITY-BUILDING  
COMMUNICATION  
COMMUNITIES**CREDIBILITY**

To strengthen the credibility of the World Heritage List, as a representative and geographically balanced testimony of cultural and natural properties of outstanding universal value.

**CONSERVATION**

To ensure the effective conservation of World Heritage properties.

**CAPACITY-BUILDING**

To promote the development of capacity-building measures, including assistance for preparing the nomination of properties, implementation of the World Heritage Convention and related instruments.

**COMMUNICATION**

To increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication.

**COMMUNITIES**

To enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.



## CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING

ARC-WH's implementation strategy and objectives are focused on facilitating capacity-building workshops and training, both at the Centre and across the Arab region, to support the management of properties and assist Arab States Members upon their request.



Ancient City of Aleppo, Syria  
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### WINTERING WATER BIRDS IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

**Date:** 13-14 January 2017

**Location:** Bahrain

**Leading Programme:** Nature

**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building, Communication.

The International Waterbird Census (IWC) is a monitoring programme that operates in 143 countries collecting valuable information on water birds living in wetlands across the globe. There are four separate regional schemes of IWC that represent major flyways of the world: Africa-Eurasia, Asia-Pacific, Caribbean, and the Neotropical realm.

During mid-January 2017, IWC conducted the first waterbird counts on four key wetland sites in Bahrain with support from the Supreme Council for Environment (SCE), and ARC-WH. The wetlands study included sites of international importance (Ramsar), while others belonged to Important Bird Area (IBA) sites, both of which support significant populations of water birds.

IWC, SCE and ARC-WH acquired a better understanding of wintering water birds in Bahrain following the study, and observed a total of 49 waterbird species with an estimated total of 24,330 individual birds. The most frequent water birds seen were the smaller waders commonly found along shallow waters and mud flats of the wetlands. Flamingoes and herons were also seen wading through the deeper waters of the areas studied.

### SUPPORTING THE NOMINATION FILE OF "THE CITY OF BABYLON"

**Date:** 22-26 January 2017

**Location:** Bahrain

**Leading Programme:** Culture

**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building

The World Monuments Fund organized a workshop held from 22-26 January 2017 at ARC-WH in Manama, Bahrain on the preparation of the nomination file for the ancient site of Babylon.

During the workshop, participants examined and analyzed potential outstanding and universal values of the site to correctly identify criteria to bolster the nomination file. Participants engaged in activities to further their understanding of the requirements of both UNESCO and ICOMOS to ensure the correct values and criteria were included once the file was presented.

Comprehensive case studies of previous nomination files were also provided to participants for comparative analysis, such as the Aflaj (Oman), Battir (Palestine) and Mada'in Saleh (Saudi Arabia). Field visits to two of Bahrain's World Heritage sites were included as part of the workshop. Participants were able to observe challenges the sites faced and how they were addressed by local heritage authorities and stakeholders.



CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE SAFEGUARDING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN LIBERATED AREAS OF IRAQ

**Date:** February 27-28, 2017  
**Location:** Paris, France  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building, Communication, Conservation,

To address and increase coordination efforts between the national and international initiatives towards the gradual rehabilitation of the cultural heritage in Iraq, a two-day conference was held on 27 February 2017, bringing together 80 international experts in heritage, including ARC-WH, and Iraqi government officials, at UNESCO’s Headquarters in Paris, France. Action plans to protect and preserve Iraq’s diverse heritage, including its museums, archaeological sites, historic and religious heritage monuments and properties, were discussed and examined by the participants.

THIRD MEETING OF SIGNATORIES TO THE DUGONG MOU AND THE SEAGRASS AND DUGONG TECHNICAL WORKSHOP

**Date:** 13-16 March 2017  
**Location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Community, Communication

ARC-WH attended the Third Meeting of Signatories (MOS3) to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habits throughout their Range (Dugong MOU), which was held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from 13-16 March 2017.

The aim of the meeting was to increase the understanding and relationship of the World Heritage Convention and dugong populations in the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea.

The event was attended by various signatories of the Dugong MoU to discuss the implementation of the Dugong MoU and agreement in each country. The meeting was followed by a technical training workshop that included a range of surveying techniques and practices focused on conservation of dugongs and their habitats.

FIELD VISIT TO RAS SANAD WETLANDS IN TUBLI BAY

**Date:** 4 April 2017  
**Location:** Tubli, Bahrain  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building, Communication

Nestled within Tubli Bay, located in Bahrain, are the Mangroves of Ras Sanad. ARC-WH and the Supreme Council of Environment (SCE) of Bahrain organized a joint field visit to the site to examine the status of the wetland environment and determine what areas of conservation needed to be improved.

ARC-WH and SCE observed a total of 18 bird species, some hatchery and other migratory. After the field visit, the team agreed to a follow-up meeting to discuss their findings and observations, to increase preservation efforts of the region’s natural heritage, and to map out ways in which the area could be sustainably developed into a reserve for eco-tourism.



SUPPORTING THE UPSTREAM PROCESS FOR BABYLON

**Date:** 24-25 April 2017  
**Location:** Babylon, Iraq  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Communication

Together with Babylon University, the Local Government of Babylon organized a two-day conference from 24-25 April 2017, designated Scientific Conference for History, Culture and Antiquities under the slogan «Babylon is a World Heritage», and held at Murdoch Hall in the Babylon Historical Complex of Babylon Governorate. Scientific discussions of papers presented on scopes of work conducted by the range of invitees were the focal point of the conference. ARC-WH was invited as a key stakeholder to this event due to both its mandate and its knowledge on cultural and natural heritage of the Arab region.

During the opening session, the Babylon Governor expressed an interest in inscribing Babylon onto the World Heritage List, offering support required for this aspiration. The conference was attended by a spectrum of participants including representatives from governmental institutions, universities, experts and professionals, and NGOs.



6TH NATIONAL GEOPARKS WORKSHOP IN TUNISIA

**Date:** 5-8 May 2017  
**Location:** Tataouine, Tunisia  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Communication

ARC-WH had the opportunity to meet with stakeholders such as the Governor of Babylon and experts from Leicester University who expressed an interest in funding potential projects that would contribute to the support of better management of the Babylon Archaeological site. ARC-WH shared its past experiences relating to when it assisted Iraq during the development of the Ahwar nomination file, highlighting lessons learned from this nomination process.

ARC-WH was invited to attend the 6th National Geoparks Forum held in Tataouine, Tunisia from 5-8 May 2017. Regional researchers, geologists, national stakeholders and scientists met together to exchange ideas towards the establishment of the first Geoparks in Tunisia. The workshop included technical lectures and scientific intervention sessions that discussed the relevance of the proposed Geoparks for southern Tunisia, as well as the requirements needing fulfillment to establish the park.

Field visits were arranged to various sites located within the boundaries that demonstrated the diversity and uniqueness of the proposed area. Attendees observed dinosaur and plant fossils, intricate geological patterns and damming systems that were once used by ancient inhabitants who managed the basin to gain access to a reliable water source.

Findings from the site visits that have thus far been made have added to the importance of establishing a Geoparks area, all of which will be mentioned in the nomination profile of the boundaries. Following the forum, further technical support was provided to initiate the project proposal on national and regional levels.



CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING

LINKING NATURE AND CULTURE IN WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGEMENT – LNC17

**Date:** 10-16 June 2017  
**Location:** Røros, Norway  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Communication, Community, Conservation, Credibility, and Capacity building

ARC-WH participated in the training course organized by the advisory bodies IUCN and ICCROM, entitled Linking Nature and Culture in World Heritage Site Management – LNC17 held in Røros, Norway. The course enhanced the participants’ understanding and skills to address cultural and natural interlinkages by including local communities as an integral component to improving site management processes at World Heritage sites.

ANNUAL ALECSO MEETING IN KUWAIT, PRIOR TO THE WORLD HERITAGE

**COMMITTEE MEETING OF ARAB EXPERTS ON WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**  
**Mission:** Kuwait City, Kuwait  
**Date:** 19-20 June  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Communication

In preparation for the upcoming 41st World Heritage Committee that took place in Krakow, Poland in July in 2017, the Director of ARC-WH participated alongside a panel of experts invited by ALECSO who convened in Kuwait to discuss Cultural and Natural World heritage in the Arab region. Arab nomination files to be presented to the World Heritage Committee were reviewed and discussed by the participants who were also joined, via Skype, by ambassadors of the Arab group at UNESCO in Paris, France.

41ST SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

**Date:** 2-12 July 2017  
**Location:** Krakow, Poland

ARC-WH attended and actively participated in the 41st Session of the World Heritage Committee meeting held in Krakow, Poland from 2 until 12 July 2017. During the session, 21 new sites were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, including one site in the Arab region, Hebron/Khalil Old Town, Palestine (Cultural).



NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR MOROCCAN STATE PARTY

**Date:** 6-7 September 2017  
**Location:** Rabat, Morocco  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objectives:** Conservation, Capacity Building

ARC-WH participated in a National Workshop held from 6-7 September 2017 in Rabat, Morocco to provide technical assistance to the National Team of Morocco to review and study the 13 sites on the Tentative list of Morocco, four of which are natural and have been on the list since 1998. The workshop also examined other sites that may have potential of being added to the Tentative list.

During the workshop, attended by 18 participants, knowledge of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention was shared, as well as the procedures for submitting a nomination for natural sites and drafting an Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) statement. As it progressed, the workshop revealed that the description of the natural environment lacked information and details. An exercise to identify the potential OUV of the sites was therefore undertaken.

Following the first workshop held in September, a final workshop was held from 19-20 December 2017. Between the two workshops, field visits were organized from 2-11 October 2017 to the four natural sites.

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION PROCESS

**Date:** 11-15 September 2017  
**Location:** Djerba, Tunisia  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building,

As part of the Arab Regional Centre’s mission to support and educate regional stakeholders, whether they be government bodies or local communities, towards the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, ARCWH participated and presented case studies of sites located in the Arab region that are under threat during workshops organized by the World Heritage Centre (WHC), Institut National du Patrimoine (INP) located in Tunisia, and the Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), held on the Island of Djerba, Tunisia, from 11 until 15 September 2017.

To enhance the knowledge of experts from Maghreb countries with respect to the implementation of the Convention, as well as the complex preparation of nomination dossiers, participants attended workshops and participated in excursions across Djerba.



# 05

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
WORLD HERITAGE  
NATURE PROPERTIES IN THE ARAB  
REGION

# 74

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
CULTURAL WORLD  
HERITAGE PROPERTIES IN THE ARAB  
REGION





CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING



PROMOTING PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACHES TO CONSERVATION

**Date:** 9-21 October 2017  
**Location:** Rome, and other various locations in Italy  
**Leading Programme:** Nature and Culture  
**Strategic Building:** Capacity Building, Communication, Credibility

ARC-WH participated in the third edition of Promoting People-Centered Approaches: Engaging Communities in the Conservation of Nature and Culture (PCA-ICCROM). This course was implemented by ICCROM and IUCN, in collaboration with ICOMOS and WHC as part of the World Heritage Leadership Programme that examines the growing divide between cultural and natural heritage, when in fact, in accordance with the World Heritage Convention, the management and preservation of nature and culture should instead, be a implemented together. Twenty participants attended the international course held in Rome. The course included site visits to important surrounding areas, lectures and practical exercises to improve the understanding of the promotion of cultural and natural heritage.

The People Centered Approach focuses on engaging communities as a crucial element in the sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage on the promotion between nature and culture driven communities with regards to the management of sites.

MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES AFTER INSCRIPTION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

**Location:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
**Date:** 25-27 October 2017  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building

A two-day technical workshop in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, held from the 25 -27 October 2017, was organized by the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development in the UAE. Experts from various departments specializing in cultural heritage of the Seven Emirates were invited to examine threatened sites in the region, the role of the Ministry in the safeguarding of cultural heritage in UAE, the World Heritage mechanisms following inscription and the management and monitoring of sites.

ARC-WH was invited to clarify the concepts of the World Heritage Convention and its role in the Arab region. ARC-WH also presented an overview of its responsibilities and activities, including current and potential assistance it may provide to the Arab States with regards to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention for cultural heritage sites inscribed.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD

**Date:** 1-2 November 2017  
**Location:** Istanbul, Turkey  
**Leading Programme:** Culture

Participants shared experiences, practical examples and case studies to increase the understanding and range of challenges many World Heritage sites face in the region. Participants were invited to envisage risk preparedness strategies for the preparation of potential nomination files.

ARC-WH attended the International Conference on Preserving Cultural Heritage of the Islamic World, organized by the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), and the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) that took place on the 1 until 2 November 2017, in Istanbul, Turkey. The conference aimed towards exchanging methods, knowledge and experiences in ways of protecting, preserving and rebuilding Islamic cultural heritage.

ARC-WH introduced and presented its objectives and areas of intervention in Heritage sites. A paper prepared by ARC-WH Director entitled "Challenges of our Times; Safeguarding our Heritage, Protecting our Identity" will be included in the final publications.

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE JUSTIFICATION OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, SHARJAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**Date:** 10-11 December 2017  
**Location:** Sharjah, UAE  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building

From 10-11 December 2017, ARC-WH, together with the Management Office responsible for the preparation of the Nomination files for Sharjah, UAE, organized a training workshop on the World Heritage Convention. The workshop presented the concepts of integrity, authenticity, and the criteria for evaluating the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of cultural properties.

During the two-day workshop, requirements of management systems, protection, and monitoring of cultural heritage sites were also discussed and presented. Participants examined case studies and examples to increase their understanding of the requirements of the Operational Guidelines with regard to the submission of nomination files, including the promotion and presentation of said files to the public.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

ARC-WH has engaged with local communities, inviting the public to attend educational lectures and events. The Centre has also worked closely with various local communities in safeguarding sites and properties, particularly since the use of local knowledge has been a driving force in providing unique understanding in the monitoring and management of properties.



Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel, Egypt  
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### LAUNCH OF THE FIRST REGIONAL RED LIST ASSESSMENT OF BAHRAIN

**Date:** 9th January 2017

**Location:** ARC-WH Headquarters, Manama, Bahrain

**Leading Programme:** Nature

**Strategic Objective:** Community, Conservation, Communication

The Regional Assessment of the Kingdom of Bahrain was launched on the 9th of January and was considered the first attempt of its kind to assess the current status of selected species using the guidelines and techniques adopted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). A panel of national experts compiled a list of 29 priority species, some freshwater and others marine, which they believed should be the first group of species to be evaluated, according to the IUCN Red List. The species selected faced, and continue to face, a number of threats deriving from ongoing urban development and encroachment that cause tremendous damaging effects to natural coastlines and wetlands, where a number of freshwater and marine animals live and breed.

The Regional Assessment focused on selected species in order to develop the first regional evaluation on a national level to reveal their current status and the various threats these selected species face.

### SCREENING OF 'A PLASTIC OCEAN' DOCUMENTARY

**Date:** 15 March 2017

**Location:** ARC-WH Headquarters, Manama, Bahrain

**Leading Programme:** Nature

**Strategic Objective:** Communication, Community, Conservation

To raise awareness of the dangers faced by natural heritage sites, such as climate change and pollution, ARC-WH featured the documentary A Plastic Ocean on 15 March 2017 at its headquarters in Manama, Bahrain.

The documentary follows an international team of researchers and experts who travel across the globe to visit various locations over a span of four years to explore diverse and delicate marine ecosystems. The devastating effects of pollution and plastic are revealed, as are potential solutions to saving our oceans.

The screening of the documentary was organized cooperatively between ARC-WH, the Supreme Council for Environment, the German Embassy and Clean up Bahrain.



### VISIT OF IUCN CHIEF SCIENTIST TO ARC-WH

**Date:** 12 November 2017

**Location:** Manama, Bahrain

**Leading Programme:** Nature

**Strategic Objective:** Communication, Conservation

Dr. Thomas Brooks, IUCN Chief Scientist, held a public discussion entitled "Does Conservation Work?" on 12 November 2017 at ARC-WH. Dr. Thomas presented tools to analyze the efficiency of conservation efforts and showcased varying facets of the successes and failures of nature conservation approaches. He concluded that, although it may seem that some species may be in decline, conservation efforts have actually successfully maintained the existence of a significant number of threatened species on a global level.

During his visit to Bahrain, he conducted a field trip to the Archipelago of Hawar, organized with the Supreme Council of Environment, where he observed the rich natural heritage of the island.



COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT  
AND OUTREACH



**WORLD HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS:  
HERITAGE IN OUR HANDS**

**Date:** 20 November 2017  
**Location:** ARC-WH, Manama, Bahrain  
**Leading Programme:** ARC-WH Programme  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building, Communication

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) programme, which has continued to grow as the interest for protection and preservation of World Heritage sites becomes increasingly popular. During this significant year, volunteers participated in 51 youth action projects at 50 World Heritage properties and sites inscribed on the Tentative Lists.

The World Heritage Volunteers arrived in Bahrain on 17 November 2017 to participate in the Bahrain Fort Camp program, which lasted until 27 November 2017. The volunteers toured various sites located across Bahrain, attended lectures by experts regarding archaeological sites in Bahrain, and were trained in systematic monitoring of natural values of World Heritage properties through courses such as bird-watching count techniques. ARC-WH provided technical and financial support to the organisation of this program which gathered volunteers from around the world.

Volunteers conducted site visits to Bahrain's two UNESCO World Heritage sites – the Pearling Path of Bahrain, and Qal'at al-Bahrain – where they observed shorebirds that exist in both of these coastal locations. They then visited the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), where they became familiarized with the 1972 World Heritage Convention, as well as the main functions of ARC-WH and its role as a Category 2 UNESCO Centre. The volunteers engaged in site work, visits, and a range of activities that enriched their knowledge and understanding in the promotion and preservation of World Heritage.

**WORLD ARABIC LANGUAGE DAY**

**Date:** 18 December 2017  
**Location:** Manama, Bahrain  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Communication, Community

World Arabic Language Day is celebrated every year on 18 December, marking its official adoption as the 6th working language of UNESCO by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 18 December 1973. This auspicious day commemorates the diversity, history and great significance of a language spoken by over 290 million people.

ARC-WH and the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) celebrate this year's theme of World Arabic Language Day, chosen by UNESCO, "Arabic Language and Modern Technologies", by showcasing the use and importance of technologies in safeguarding this historical city of Jerusalem.



**TOTAL NUMBER OF  
WORLD HERITAGE  
PROPERTIES  
IN THE ARAB REGION**

82  
SITES



## STORIES FROM SOCOTRA

Since joining ARC-WH in 2013, Ismael Salem of Socotra has played a key contributing role in the Centre's involvement with the local community and study of Socotra. ARC-WH had the opportunity to sit down and talk to Ismael about activities undertaken in the safeguarding of Socotra, and to discuss the importance of the local Socotrans' symbiotic bond with the archipelago's iconic natural heritage.



Socotra Archipelago, Yemen  
© Editions Gelbart



### ARC-WH: WHAT MAKES SOCOTRA UNIQUE?

When we talk about Socotra, we have to considerate it as a group of six Yemeni islands located around 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the Indian Ocean, being Socotra, 'Abd al-Kuri, Samha, Darsa, Ka'l Far'un, and Sil. Inhabited by around 60,000 people who speak an unwritten language that possesses a rich literary and cultural heritage. And [there is] high biodiversity of flora and fauna. This is what makes Socotra such a special place.

### ARC-WH: HOW HAS THE CENTRE ASSISTED SOCOTRA'S NATURE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES THESE PAST FEW YEARS?

Since December 2013, ARC-WH has supported the Socotran Archipelago by focusing on nature, the Socotran people and their heritage. Some of these achievements are:

Strategic planning framework for the Environment Protection Authority in Socotra.

Emergency response plan to the natural disasters and civil war's impacts on nature and people

Responding to the needs of the local community and nature through sustainably eco-friendly projects which have been implemented with

the support from ARC-WH and other partners. These projects include a solar energy installment project, restoration and rehabilitation projects of damaged Kareefs, restoration of other locations damaged by construction and unsustainable development projects, and a project funded by UNESCO of impacts caused by the cyclones on endemic and threatened plants of Socotra.

### ARC-WH: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT WORKING WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WILL HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE CONSERVATION OF SOCOTRAN HERITAGE?

Of course. If we look into the history of human existence in Socotra and its rich biodiversity, you will notice that Socotrans are instinctual conservers of nature and have always lived in harmony with nature. They have also developed a deep understanding of knowledge and traditional practices. Subsequently, the Tabea'a Programme utilizes this local knowhow and assists the people of Socotra to maintain this delicate balance as new developments occur.

### ARC-WH: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE THE SOLAR PANEL PROJECT LAST YEAR ON THE ISLAND OF SAMHA?

In November 2015, I was on the Island

of Samha surveying the destructive impacts of Chapala and Meg cyclones, and to implement a project with Friends of Socotra (FoS) to repair boats damaged by the cyclones. The sea turned rough and I got stuck in Samha for two weeks.

During the evenings, the island's residents would gather in a yard to watch the one television on the island. We were watching one of the Turkish series dubbed in Arabic but we were unable to hear a thing since the electrical generator was so loud and was only two meters away. This was the source of my inspiration and [realization] that something needed to be done. I managed to get donations from Al Acacia Foundation (with support from H.E Abdulrahman Al Iriani, former minister of Water and Environment). We received solar panels along with the required equipment, and ARC-WH paid the remaining expenses for the installments.

### ARC-WH: HOW HAVE THE SOLAR PANELS CHANGED THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE ON THE ISLAND OF SAMHA IN THE LONG TERM? WILL THERE BE MORE PROJECTS LIKE THIS IN THE FUTURE?

As I mentioned earlier, our intentions were to provide the people of Samha with electrical energy in hopes of improving their standard of living.



STORIES  
FROM  
SOCOTRA



What we didn't know was that the Samhans planned on using the village's lights as a lighthouse to guide fisherman to the island and lead them home back from the seas at night. Some fisherman would get lost in the vastness of the Indian Ocean and would sadly never return. It also helped students by allowing them to study at night, and provided energy to the long-wave radio station, which is the only source of communication with [the] main island of Socotra.

ARC-WH: HAVE YOU SEEN NOTICEABLE CHANGES TO SOCOTRA'S NATURAL LANDSCAPES IN RECENT YEARS?

I was helping a team of geologists during their research when they noticed that stalactites and stalagmites in several caves had stopped growing. This raised a serious question as to what could be causing these issues. Part of the project was to share research results with the local people. The older people informed us that the climate had noticeably changed in the last few decades and that rain has lessened in some places.

ARC-WH: THE THREATENED SOCOTRI LANGUAGE DOES NOT HAVE A WRITTEN FORM OR ALPHABET, AND IT IS CRUCIAL TO SHARE AND PASS DOWN CULTURAL PRACTICES AND TRADITIONS. CAN YOU NAME SOME OF THE INITIATIVES THAT HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN TO PRESERVE THE SOCOTRI LANGUAGE?

The survival of Socotri Heritage depends on documenting and writing the language, which is difficult since it does not have a written alphabet. Some languages did not have a written form in the ancient times, and some still don't, the Socotri language being one of them. The problem is that there is not enough awareness about the disappearance of Socotri language.

Let's start with a story of inspiration: In January 2004 the German writer Gunter Grass, winner of the Nobel Laureate, visited the island with other people from the Yemeni literature and writers Union. We selected three of the best poets of Socotra to meet the famous German writer under the shade of the dragoon blood trees in the highland of the eastern plateau. I had the extremely difficult job of translating the poem from Socotran to Arabic, and then finally into English. However, translation can only go so far, and the context can sometimes change from the original language. A year later, the Socotri Association for

Heritage and History was created, and I was responsible for cultural heritage protection of Socotra.

Three years later another source of inspiration came from the poetry competition that takes place in UAE called «Million's Poet», which is a popular television show. In 2008 the association initiated its first poetry competition called "Competition of the poets of Socotra". The event was attended by thousands of Socotrans from the islands and outside.

It has been implemented for the past five years in the city of Hadibo, the capital of the island, and lasts for one week. A poetry competition ranks Socotran poets, and helps them to identify their language and skills.

The other goal we had was the revival of local heritage. We wanted to document the Socotri language, literature and folklore to promote the fragile Socotri heritage and the importance and need to preserve it. The search for local and international partners to preserve the heritage of Socotra continues.

The festival stopped for [a] few years, so ARC-WH decided to revive the initiative this year (2017). We worked with local partners, in addition to other international partners like Freire University and Royal Botanical Garden, in a project funded by the British Council to continue the initiative.



ARC-WH: SOCOTRA HONEY IS ONE OF THE MOST DISTINCT SOURCES OF HONEY IN THE WORLD. WOULD YOU SAY THIS HAS MOSTLY TO DO WITH THE ARCHIPELAGO'S UNIQUE SPECIES OF FLORA? CAN YOU SHARE SOME OF LOCAL SOCOTRAN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HONEY?

There is no doubt that the richness of the plants in Socotra (over 800 species) is the reason bees make about four different kinds of honey. The production of honey spreads over an entire year. Part of Socotra's geology includes caves and mountains, offering safe environments for the bees to produce good quality honey.

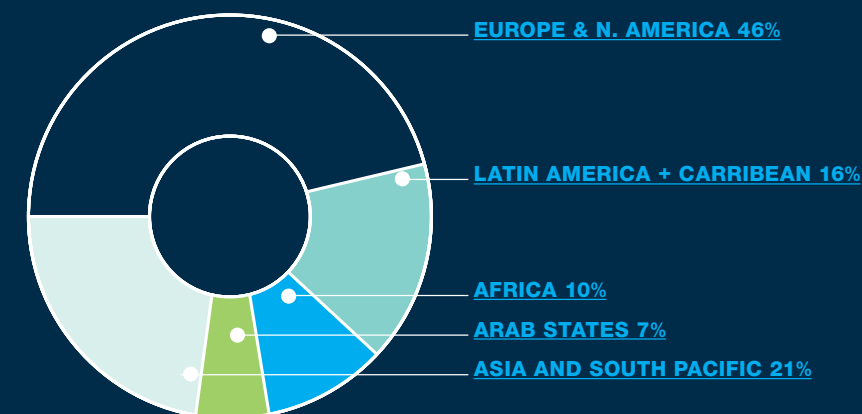
Geographic isolation and limited food sources have shaped Socotran knowledge, linked by the strong bond and understanding between them and their natural environment, spanning over thousands of years. The local bee keepers developed [their] knowledge about bee breeding, and time of honey production, types of honey, the best time for harvesting and so on.

Lastly, Socotran honey was known and promoted by Arab visitors who would buy it for its medicinal purposes. But we still need to do more work to add it to the list of local economic sources to help the preservation of the island and the improvement of people's life.



## INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

On both a regional and international scale, the provision and dissemination of valuable information concerning the implementation of the World Heritage Convention – its policies and processes of management and conservation – comprise an integral component of the Centre's function in maintaining its strategic objectives, and especially communication. This includes providing publications translated into Arabic and an Arabic language website to assist Arab States and regional stakeholders.



### % OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN DANGER BY REGION

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat#s9>

#### PUBLICATION OF TABEA II REPORT IN ARABIC

**Date:** 6 June 2017

**Location:** ARC-WH Headquarters  
Manama, Bahrain

**Leading Programme:** Nature

**Strategic Objective:** Communication,  
Capacity Building, Conservation

On 6 June 2017 ARCWH launched the TABEA II Report in Arabic. The report aims at promoting and fostering Natural Heritage in the Arab region, as well as increasing the capacity-building efforts of those involved in protection of sites. The event was attended the Supreme Council for the Environment of Bahrain, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as a number of researchers and experts.

ARC-WH collaborated with IUCN and the German Embassy in Bahrain for the completion of the report, which provides recommendations towards the promotion and preservation of natural sites located to the Arab region. The TABEA III Report is scheduled to be published in 2018 to continue the dissemination of valuable knowledge concerning natural sites in the Arab world.

#### RELAUNCH OF ARC-WH WEBSITE AND BRAND DEVELOPMENT

**Date:** December 2017- Ongoing

**Leading Programme:** Culture and  
Nature

**Strategic Objective:** Communication,  
Capacity Building, Community,  
Credibility, Conservation

The Arab region has faced a prolonged period of conflicts and natural disasters, leaving World Heritage sites and properties across the region vulnerable. Providing information and weaving an extensive network of specialists to enhance stakeholders' understanding of the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention are imperative tasks.

ARC-WH's role in cultural preservation and natural conservation via communication, disseminating information, and assisting Arab States parties in the utilization of the Convention as a tool of rehabilitation and recovery has prompted ARC-WH to relaunch its website, making it more navigable, accessible, comprehensive, and informative compared to its digital predecessor.

As a Category 2 Centre, ARC-WH functions include: developing an Arabic language website (including English and French); providing extensive information relating to the World Heritage Convention and its implementation; providing technical assistance and logistical and financial support; and thereby securing the promotion and protection of cultural and natural heritage in the Arab region. The website and brand development aim to reflect the aforementioned purposes of the Centre in a way that is as authoritative and dynamic as possible.



## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

This year, ARC-WH focused on diversifying its resource development and external relations. Working closely with partners and donors, it also forged new partnerships for the sake of regional and international cooperation. In addition, ARC-WH has taken action to increase its involvement in the promotion of education and protection of cultural and natural World Heritage sites in the Arab region.



### REACHING OUT TO SCHOOLS AND PROMOTING CAREERS IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

**Date:** 8 March 2017

**Location:** Muharraq, Bahrain

**Leading Programme:** Culture

**Strategic Objective:** Community, Communication

The External Relations and Partnership Specialists of ARC-WH was invited by the French School of Bahrain Lycée Français on 8 March 2017 to attend the school's Annual Student's Job Fair. Professionals from various fields from engineering to government participated. Students aged 14-17 had the opportunity to question ARC-WH and its functions, objectives and role in the region is. Professional and educational advice was given by ARC-WH to students interested in possibly pursuing an career in cultural heritage.

### ARC-WH AND CSS-EBLA LAUNCH PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT PROJECTS IN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Date:** 3-4 May 2017

**Location:** Turin, Italy

**Leading Programme:** Culture

**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building, Communication, Credibility

Following a visit in May 2017 to Turin, Italy, the Arab Regional Center for World Heritage partnered with Centro Studi Silvia Santagata (CSS-EBLA), a non-profit research center and UNESCO Category 2 Centre specializing in Cultural Heritage and Economic Development. During the visit, both agencies worked closely together, mapping potential joint activities such as exhibitions, workshops and panel discussions aimed at promoting educational practices towards sustainable World Heritage. ARC-WH and CSS-EBLA agreed to draft and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), clarifying the role of each institution towards their joint-efforts in culture World Heritage and economic development throughout the year.

This symbiotic relationship between the two agencies is especially important during this critical period, particularly with the need to provide intellectual studies and research to experts and stakeholders in the field of sustainable World Heritage Site management and urban regeneration. In July 2017, the two Centres had the opportunity co-organize a panel during the 41st UNESCO World Heritage Committee that took place in Krakow, Poland. The panel focused on the role of protecting and restoring World Heritage Sites with the goal of long-term economic sustainability in mind.



# 03

TOTAL NUMBER OF MIXED  
WORLD HERITAGE  
PROPERTIES IN  
THE ARAB REGION





EXTERNAL  
RELATIONS



**WORLD HERITAGE AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT: URBAN  
REGENERATION IN HISTORIC CITIES**

**Date:** 9 July 2017  
**Location:** Krakow, Poland  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Communication

During the 41st UNESCO World Heritage Committee, ARC-WH and CSS-Elba organized a joint seminar entitled Panel Discussion on World Heritage and Economic Development: Comparative Analysis of Urban Regeneration in Historic Cities. The panel examined the role of protecting and restoring World Heritage Sites with the goal of long-term economic sustainability in mind. The seminar drew parallels between the two establishments and their critical roles with respect to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Case studies on urban regeneration projects in World Heritage cities located in the Arab region and other countries were presented by experts from ARC-WH, CSS- Elba and the Bahrain Authority of Culture and Authority. These studies focused on locations such as Old Jerusalem and the Pearling Path of Bahrain that illustrate the positive impacts of urban regeneration of timeless cities.

**SECOND COORDINATION MEETING  
WITH CATEGORY 2 CENTRES**

**Date:** 23-24 November 2017  
**Location:** UNESCO HQ Paris, France  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Communication, Capacity Building

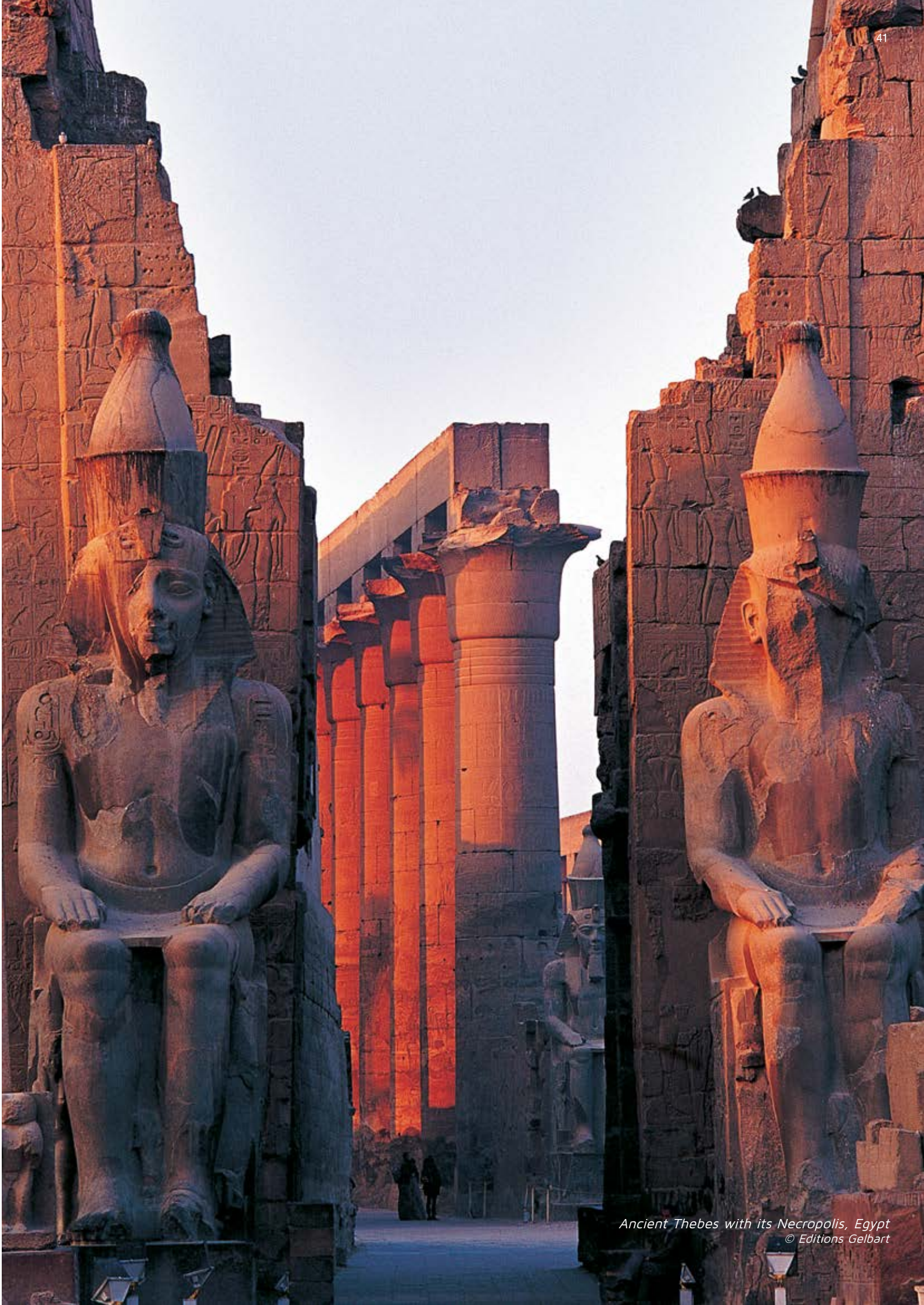
ARC-WH participated in the Second coordination meeting of Category 2 Centres (C2Cs), UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks related to the UNESCO Culture Sector, held from 23-24 November 2017 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France.

The meeting promoted discussions regarding the challenges and opportunities of how Category 2 institutes, UNESCO and UNITWIN Chairs could contribute to UNESCO's mission towards the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by using culture as the instrument to accomplish this objective.

On one afternoon break-up sessions were divided into four thematic groups that focused on Cultural and Natural Heritage, Intangible Heritage, Creativity, and Culture in Emergencies. This allowed for the participants to share knowledge and exchange experiences and ideas regarding various thematic subjects covered.

A new online tool, "Network of UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs and C2Cs related to Culture", was launched during the two-day event to enhance communication efforts among these cultural institutions by creating a platform where information can be shared and exchanged more effectively.

Participants left with a better understanding of how to improve networking and partnership, and to enhance communication strategies, amongst the above-mentioned institutes.



Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis, Egypt  
© Editions Gelbart



## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

Between working with and building the capacities of Arab States Parties and stakeholders, ARC-WH participated in a number of activities, some that took the Centre abroad, while others were held at the premises of ARC-WH.



### UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL VISITS THE ARAB REGIONAL CENTRE FOR WORLD HERITAGE

**Date:** 18 May 2017

**Location:** ARC-WH Headquarters, Manama, Bahrain

On 18 May 2017, Director-General Irina Bokova visited the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, where she was greeted by the Chairperson of the Governing Board of ARC-WH, Sheikha Mai Al-Khalifa, Director of ARC-WH, Dr. Shadia Touqan, and ARC-WH staff. During the visit, the Chairperson of the Governing Board affirmed that the Centre will continue to strengthen its relations with UNESCO and the World Heritage Center, located in Paris, France, to serve and protect cultural and natural heritage in the Arab region.

### THE 30TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ICCROM

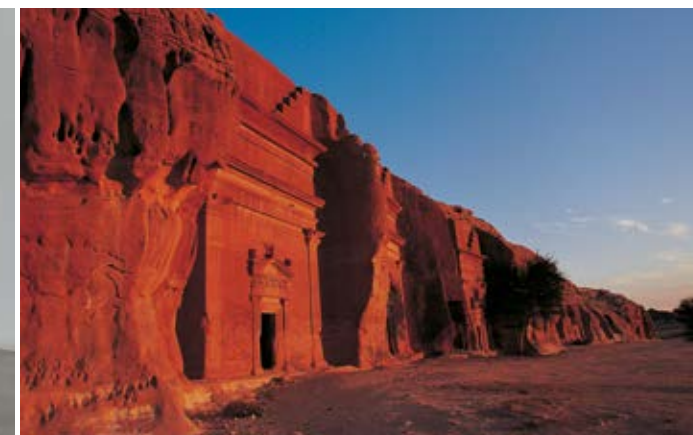
**Date:** 28 November-1 December 2017

**Location:** Rome, Italy

**Strategic Objective:** Communication

ARC-WH participated in the 2nd Consultative Board Meeting of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) at its Regional Conservation Centre, located in Sharjah, UAE. The meeting gathered representatives of Arab States in the areas of cultural conservation and highlighted the important role played by ICCROM ATHAR in the region. ARC-WH expressed its continued support for the strategic partnership between the two institutions.

In line with ARC-WH's close partnership with the Advisory Bodies, the Centre also attended the 30th Session of the General Assembly of ICCROM as an observer. A thematic session was held during the assembly which discussed "Post-Conflict Reconstruction-Recovery and Community Involvement", and showcased the importance of coordination among institutions with regard to reconstruction, while also engaging the local community to ensure cultural diversity during the delicate process of restoration. Countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan, Lebanon and Syria were used as case studies to emphasize the significance of culture during the stages of recovery.



### OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 1ST SAUDI ARCHAEOLOGY CONVENTION

**Date:** 7-9 November 2017

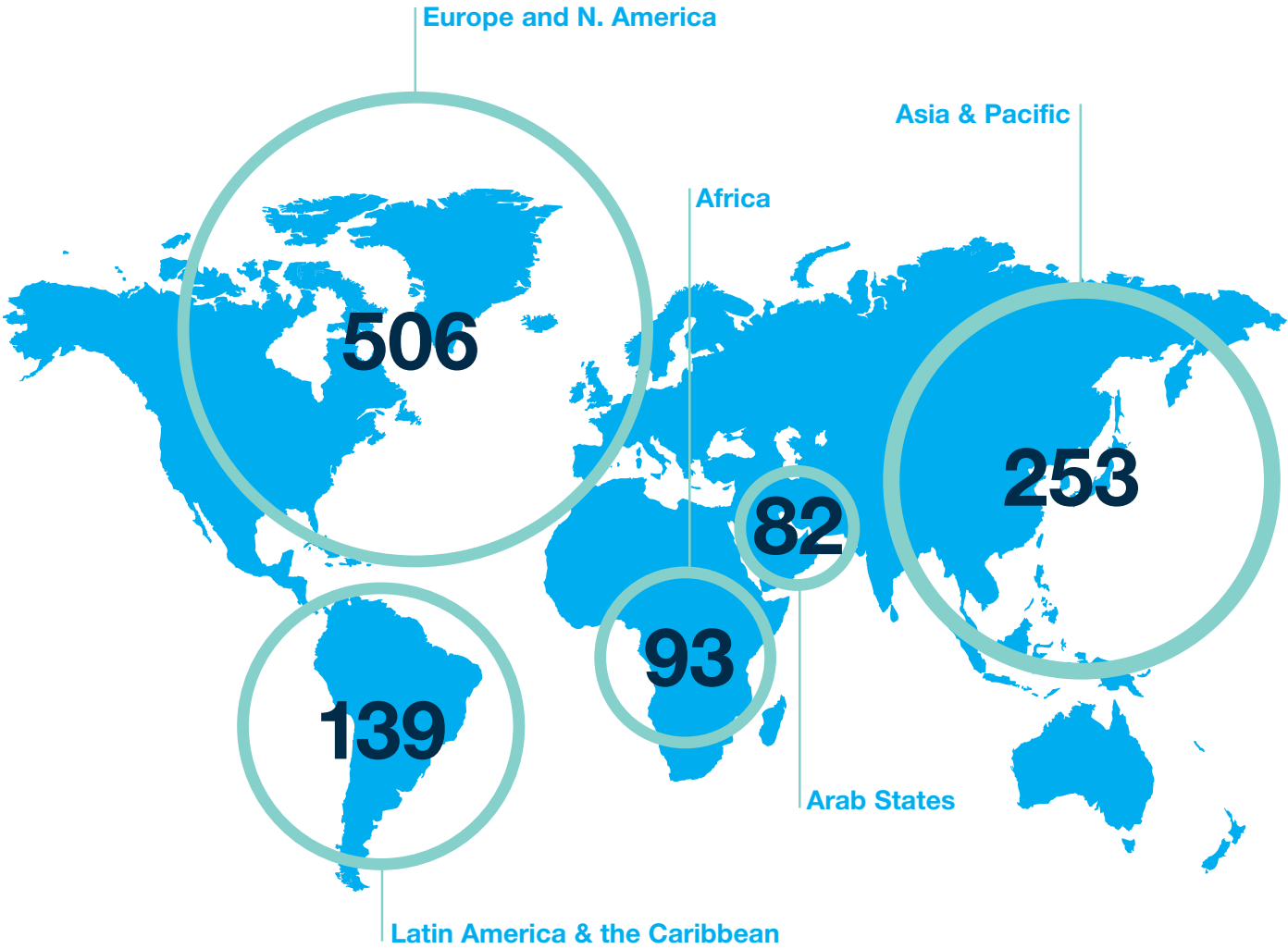
**Location:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

ARC-WH was invited to attend the opening ceremony of the 1st Saudi Archaeology Convention from 7 to 9 November 2017 held in the National Museum of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The Convention, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' Cultural Heritage Initiative, is an initiative highlighting the efforts and interventions undertaken by government agencies and individuals working towards the documentation and preservation of the country's antiquities and historical cultural heritage.



HIGHLIGHTS  
OF 2017

NUMBER OF WORLD  
HERITAGE PROPERTIES  
BY REGION



THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
STATES PARTIES TO THE WORLD  
HERITAGE CONVENTION

**Date:** 14–15 November 2017  
**Location:** UNESCO Headquarters,  
Paris, France

During the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, from 14 through 15 November 2017, the 21st General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. With the attendance of ARC-WH, twelve new countries were elected to the World Heritage Committee, thereby replacing the twelve outgoing members.

Bahrain, as one of the newly elected members, won an astonishing 121 votes during the first round of voting, and, alongside the new Committee, will be responsible for the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention and provide technical assistance to States Parties. The following day, 15 November 2017, it was announced that Bahrain would be hosting the 42nd World Heritage Committee set to take place from 24 June through 4 July 2018.

TECHNICAL MEETING TO EVALUATE  
MANAMA'S POTENTIAL AS A  
WORLD HERITAGE SITE

**Date:** 10 December 2017  
**Location:** Manama, Bahrain  
**Leading Programme:** Culture

ARC-WH is providing technical assistance to the Kingdom of Bahrain by assessing the urban fabric of Manama and evaluating its potential as a World Heritage site. If the latter potential is confirmed, ARC-WH will continue to assist Bahrain as it explores ways that could lead to a successful nomination file. As part of its efforts, ARC-WH organized a meeting with local experts and researchers to discuss the value and state of conservation of various components located within the historic core of the city of Manama.



WORLD HERITAGE  
LIST OF ACTIVITIES  
AND INVOLVEMENT

Working closely with Arab States Parties to assist them in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, its procedures, guidelines, management and monitoring of properties is the fundamental driving force of ARC-WH's mandate and mission in the Arab region.



Medina of Fez, Morocco  
© Editions Gelbart

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT  
BETWEEN SOCOTRA AND ARC-WH

**Date:** January 2017  
**Location:** Socotra (Arabian Sea archipelago)  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Community, Capacity Building, Communication

A sustainability project was initiated between ARC-WH and FoS to save threatened Socotran plants by utilizing and involving the local community to replant and regenerate endangered species through deliberately planting them in areas impacted by road construction. This not only ensured the return of local vegetation, but was also intended to rehabilitate extraction areas. Initially created in response to the destructive impacts of a hurricane in November 2015 that devastated rare and endeared endemic species of flora found only in Socotra, this project proved to be highly effective.

Today, the rehabilitated area is blossoming! It has been fenced off to protect it from goats, and 19 plant species have since returned to the protected site thanks to the know-how and knowledge of the local community.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
THE SAFEGUARDING OF CULTURAL  
HERITAGE IN LIBERATED AREAS  
OF IRAQ

**Date:** February 27-28, 2017  
**Location:** Paris, France  
**Leading Programme:** Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity Building, Communication, Conservation,

To address and increase coordination efforts between the national and international initiatives towards the gradual rehabilitation of the cultural heritage in Iraq, a two-day conference was held on 27 February 2017, bringing together 80 international experts in heritage, including ARC-WH, and Iraqi government officials, at UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris, France. Action plans to protect and preserve Iraq's diverse heritage, including its museums, archaeological sites, historic and religious heritage monuments and properties, were discussed and examined by the participants.



WORLD HERITAGE  
LIST OF ACTIVITIES  
AND INVOLVEMENT

FIRST INTERNATIONAL  
COORDINATION MEETING FOR THE  
RECOVERY OF ALEPPO’S HERITAGE

**Date:** March 2-3, 2017

**Location:** Beirut, Lebanon

**Leading Programme:** Culture

**Strategic Objective:** Capacity  
Building, Conservation, Community,  
Communication

In response to the ongoing loss and destruction of Syrian cultural heritage sites, and to adequately prepare the post-conflict management of Syria, on 1 March 2014 an operational approach, funded by the European Union and aided by the Flemish Government and the Austrian Government, and designated the ‘Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage’, had been established

Based at the UNESCO Office in Beirut, a Project Management Unit is now implementing a ‘three-pronged approach’ to evaluate the extent of damages to sites as well as sites lost. The approach is a coordinated effort among various international and national experts to discuss, assess and document the damages sustained to cultural sites in Syria, and to increase the capacity and technical knowledge of stakeholders.

[Source: UNESCO]

Over 2-3 March 2017 the First International Coordination Meeting for the recovery of Aleppo’s heritage was held in Beirut and attended by the Director of ARC-WH. Discussions covered technical and scientific documentation strategies regarding the safeguarding and damage assessment of Aleppo’s cultural heritage, including the mapping of properties and sites, first aid-measures, revitalization and restoration works to sites of the citadel, Madrasa Al-Sultaniya, grand serial and the souk of the Ancient City of Aleppo, an iconic World Heritage Site inscribed in 1986, and included in UNESCO’s List of World Heritage in Danger since 2013.

An action plan to continue efforts towards the restoration of Aleppo was finalized during a follow-up meeting in Aleppo on 15 March 2017 by Syrian stakeholders. It was agreed that UNESCO would establish a unit in Aleppo that would provide further evaluation regarding the damage assessment of the ancient city.

WORKSHOP ON THE MANAGEMENT  
OF NATURAL HERITAGE IN  
PALESTINE

**Date:** 10-11 April 2017

**Location:** Ramallah and Battir,  
Palestine

**Leading Programme:** Nature

**Strategic Objective:** Capacity  
Building, Community, Conservation

ARC-WH participated in a workshop held in Ramallah and Battir, Palestine from 10-11 April 2017. Designed as an introductory training course on the World Heritage Convention, with a focus on natural World Heritage, training included general World Heritage concepts and processes. Global and regional examples were used to illustrate the concepts mentioned. Special attention was given to the approach of value-based management of World Heritage sites.



INVENTORYING AND ANALYZING  
THREATS OF THE INTEGRITY  
OF THE NATURAL VALUES OF  
THE AHWAR WORLD HERITAGE  
PROPERTY, SOUTHERN IRAQ

**Date:** 25 – 27 April 2017

**Location:** Basra, Iraq

**Leading Programme:** Nature  
and Culture

**Strategic Objective:** Capacity  
Building, Conservation

The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Sumerian Cities is a mixed site comprised of seven components, three archaeological sites and four delicate wetland marshes. To ensure effectual conservation and management efforts are implemented to preserve natural values of the property, ARC-WH held a training workshop in Basra, Iraq from 25-27 April aimed at upgrading the inventorying and technical capacities of the staff responsible for regular monitoring of the Ahwar’s natural values and threats to them.

Using the latest monitoring methodology, Smart Management Plan (SMP), trainees were able to replace outdated information regarding the site with data obtained from the SMP. This methodology greatly contributes to the understanding and identification of threats faced by the marshes.

The workshop was divided into a class session and a practical session. Trainees were first introduced to systematic monitoring intended to improve the management of the natural components of the Ahwar. The practical session took place in East Hammar Marsh to apply the knowledge acquired. Samples from different areas of the wetland area were collected for inventory and analysis to better determine threats to the Ahwar property. Systematic sampling also provides useful results and suggests specific actions needed, and prioritizes conservation for the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the marshes.

COORDINATION MEETING FOR THE  
NATURAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE  
SANGANEB MARINE NATIONAL  
PARK AND DUNGONAB BAY

**Date:** 9-10 May 2017

**Location:** Manama, Bahrain

**Leading Programme:** Nature

**Strategic Objective:** Capacity  
Building

To offer the upmost support to the State Party of Sudan, ARC-WH organized a Coordination Meeting for the natural World Heritage Site Sanganeb Marine National Park and Dungonab Bay from 9-10 May 2017, in Manama, Bahrain. The aim was to bring stakeholders together to discuss the current status of the World Heritage site and its state of conservation and management. The meeting was also intended to assist participants in preparing an action plan in response to the World Heritage Committee’s recommendations.

The two-day coordination meeting proved beneficial to the Sudanese Authorities, and brought relevant stakeholders together who were able to familiarize themselves with one another, and allowed for the discussion of roles and responsibilities in order to respond to the needs of the concerned State Party.





TOTAL NUMBER OF  
WORLD HERITAGE  
SITES IN DANGER  
WORLDWIDE

54  
SITES



WORLD HERITAGE  
LIST OF ACTIVITIES  
AND INVOLVEMENT

EXPLORING ICHKEUL NATIONAL  
PARK

**Date:** 9 May 2017  
**Location:** Ichkeul National Park,  
Tunisia  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Conservation

Lake Ichkeul, located in the National Park of Ichkeul, in northern Tunisia, is the last remaining freshwater lake of a chain that once stretched across the northern areas of the vast African continent. On 9 May 2017 ARC-WH visited the park, inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1980, to study the lake as a crucial stopover point for migratory birds (waders and waterfowl) who feed and nest in the area. ARC-WH studied several areas of the park, as well as the surrounding areas of the lake, to assess the park's current environmental status.

SOCOTRA SOLAR PANEL PROJECT

**Date:** 6 June 2017  
**Location:** Socotra  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Community,  
Capacity Building, Communication

Located southwest from the main Island of Socotra is the island of Samha. Measuring just 40 kilometres in area, it is considered the smallest of the three inhabited islands of the Socotran Archipelago. Upon this remote island is the village of Khayisat al Shaikh, home to approximately 270 people who, until recently, lived without access to electricity or solid infrastructure.

Except for isolated locations lit only by the faint flickering of oil lamps, much of the island of Samha remained in total darkness once the sun set. Elementary school students were unable to study; fisherman faced great difficulty finding the island on their way home from fishing trips, and were sometimes lost at sea. Samha's communication system was also limited. The village relied on a single long-wave radio powered by a small solar panel, which often ran out of power, leaving the Samha population helpless, unable to communicate with passing ships or with the main Island of Socotra.

The Acacia Foundation and ARC-WH rose to the challenge of lighting by building and implementing a sustainable solar power project that would provide Samha with environmentally friendly source of electricity without effecting the outstanding value of Socotra's biodiversity and delicate ecosystem.

Both institutions worked closely with the local community to ensure the village was not left in isolated darkness again by teaching the people of Samha how to maintain the solar panels, thereby implementing a sustainable solution that ensured prolonged use of eco-friendly power.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE  
STATE OF PALESTINE

**Location:** Palestine  
**Date:** 14- 15 August 2017  
**Leading Programme:** Culture and  
Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Conservation,  
Capacity Building, Communication,  
Community, Credibility

Palestine's Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, H.E. Rola Ma'ayah, welcomed the ARC-WH team to discuss methods of collaboration. The need for updating the Tentative List of Palestine, and the importance of building and fostering the nation's capacities in various fields, such as preparation with regard to the Tentative List, were discussed. Together with the Mayor of Bethlehem Municipality, ARC-WH visited Palestine's first World Heritage site, inscribed in 2012 as Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem. Conservation and restoration activities being done to the roof and intricate mosaics within and outside of the Church were examined. All these remedial measures and examinations of the site are included among the Palestinian Authority's efforts to enhance its conservation status and to achieve the eventual removal of the site from the World Heritage List in Danger.

ARC-WH also visited another site belonging to Palestine that was inscribed in 2017, Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir. The team met with the Mayor of Battir Municipality to explore possible collaboration with ARC-WH and discuss how the Centre can provide input and assistance. ARC-WH stressed the importance of the vital roles played by the local people of Battir, as well as encouraging the return of people to farm the agricultural properties of this area.

Following the visit to Battir, ARC-WH met with the UNESCO Ramallah and were joined by the head of the culture department of the UNESCO Office, and the head of the UNESCO National Committee in Palestine, as well as other relevant representatives, to discuss joint efforts to serve Palestinian Culture and Natural Heritage such as capacity building, national registry for cultural and natural heritage, management and conservation of World Heritage sites.

Gaza was also discussed during the visit to UNESCO Ramallah. It was agreed that ARC-WH would participate in supporting the national inventories in Gaza.

A meeting was held with the head of the Ministry of the Environment Quality Authority (EQA), Eng. Adalah Attiri, who agreed on the importance of reviewing and updating the Tentative List of Palestine. EQA is currently undertaking a biodiversity survey for Palestine to support this process. They also requested assistance for conducting a Red List Assessment to facilitate the selection of sites for identification from the Tentative List. EQA is also conducting a biodiversity study of Battir with regard to the study of management and conservation measures for biodiversity of the World Heritage site of Battir.



WORLD HERITAGE  
LIST OF ACTIVITIES  
AND INVOLVEMENT

THE POETIC RECITALS OF  
SOCOTRAN HERITAGE: POETRY  
FESTIVAL, THE SOCOTRI  
ASSOCIATION OF HERITAGE AND  
HISTORY & ARC-WH

**Date:** 22 August 2017  
**Location:** Socotra, Yemen  
**Leading Programme:** Cultural  
**Strategic Objective:** Community,  
Communication, Conservation

The archipelago of Socotra is increasingly frequented by tourists and researchers and impacted by urban development and other influences from the outside world, such as mobile phones and the Internet. As a result, its cultural and natural heritage is being compromised. A significant impact is the fading appreciation and awareness of the Socotran language and cultural practices amongst the local inhabitants.

To raise awareness amongst the inhabitants of Socotra and the international community, and possibly attracting local and global partners to assist in the preservation of the fading Socotran language, oral literature and lore, a ceremony was jointly organized by the Socotri Association of Heritage and History and ARC-WH. Recitals were recorded during the event to preserve the Socotri language, which does not have an alphabet or form of writing. Socotri represents the living expression of the

local culture’s intangible heritage, and how the language has assisted in the understanding of Socotran Cultural and Natural heritage as it was passed down from generation to generation over the centuries.

The event provided an opportunity to establish an outreach programme amongst the Socotran society, highlighting the importance of salvaging and maintaining their vibrant culture and ancient traditions and stories, which have been passed from generation to generation through poetry and recitation, thus safeguarding traditions through echoing the words of their ancestors that still resonate today. Hopefully, they will continue to do so in the future.

PREPARATION OF THE FIRST STATE  
OF CONSERVATION (SOC) REPORT  
ON THE NATURAL COMPONENTS  
FOR THE AHWAR WORLD HERITAGE  
PROPERTY, SOUTHERN IRAQ

**Date:** 3-4 October 2017  
**Location:** Baghdad, Iraq  
**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Conservation,  
Capacity Building, Communication

Following an official invitation by Iraq’s Ministry of Environment requesting ARC-WH’s technical guidance for the preparation of the State of Conservation (SoC) report of the natural components of the Ahwar World Heritage property, a two-day workshop was organized from 3-4 October 2017.

Since this was the First State of Conservation Report by the Ministry of Environment, ARC-WH provided training for staff from the national team chosen to prepare the report regarding the Ahwar property, before its submittal to UNESCO and IUCN. The workshop improved the technical capacity of the national team to correctly prepare its first SoC report to meet UNESCO’s requirements and standards.

The “threats” table of the site was updated in terms of management planning, and a technical report was produced providing a detailed inventory of threats faced by the Ahwar. The national team also produced an analysis of the four natural components of the World Heritage property.

WORKSHOP ON THE PREPARATION  
OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION  
REPORT TO THE WORLD HERITAGE  
COMMITTEE FOR THE UNESCO  
WORLD HERITAGE SITE WADI RUM  
PROTECTED AREA

**Date:** 7-9 October 2017  
**Location:** Wadi Rum Protected Area,  
Jordan  
**Leading Programme:** Nature and  
Culture  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity  
Building, Conservation, Community

From the 7 until 9 October 2017, ARC-WH, in collaboration with Wadi Rum Protected Area and Department of Antiquities in Jordan, organized a workshop on the preparation of the State of Conservation Report to the World Heritage Committee for the UNESCO World Heritage site Wadi Rum Protected Area on the premises of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone in the city of Aqaba, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The aforementioned workshop aimed to conduct a coordination meeting between numerous stakeholders to prepare a collective national response to the World Heritage Committee Decision 40 COM 7B.65 which was adopted in 2016, as well as related Advisory Bodies reports in the previous years.

The report will be an update of the State of Conservation of the Wadi Rum Protected Area to be submitted by the State Party of Jordan before the 1st of December 2017 for discussion during the 42nd World Heritage Committee in 2018.

Following a brief field visit to Petra, ARC-WH then evaluated the Wadi Rum Protected Area. Challenges within the World Heritage Property were noted, such as illegal campsites, routes used by vehicles in undesignated areas to assess the effects on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.



WORLD HERITAGE  
LIST OF ACTIVITIES  
AND INVOLVEMENT



16TH CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL  
GENERAL MEETING OF THE  
FRIENDS OF SOCOTRA

**Date:** 27-29 October 2017

**Location:** Bern, Switzerland

**Leading Programme:** Nature  
Programme

**Strategic Objective:** Communication,  
Community

ARC-WH participated the 16th Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Socotra held in Bern, Switzerland from 27-29 October. During the conference, ARC-WH revealed their findings via a two-part presentation, “Socotra is an inspiration for TABE’A Programme”.

The first half of the presentation demonstrated the strategic inputs invested in the World Heritage sites of Socotra, and covered the results of the input of the TABE’A Programme implemented in Socotra, a strategic planning framework for the Environment Protection Authority, the Emergency Response Plan following the destruction from two cyclones in 2015, as well as capacity-building activities.

The second half of the presentation consisted mainly of a description of activities involving the local community:

1. Solar Panel installment in Samha Island in Socotra (2016).
2. Vegetation cover rehabilitation project (2017).
3. Kareefs restoration project (kareefs are water collecting points) (2016).
4. Socotri Language Poetry Festival (2017).

FoS and ARC-WH affirmed their mutual desire to continue their partnership, and shared future plans for potential projects as they continue to work together to protect and salvage the delicate ecosystems of both Socotra’s environment and its ancient heritage through sustainable and innovative methods.

ASSISTANCE OF THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD  
HERITAGE CONVENTION AND  
PREPARATION OF THE STATE OF  
CONSERVATION (SOC) REPORT OF  
THE BANC D’ARGUIN NATIONAL  
PARK, MAURITANIA

**Date:** 24-29 November 2017

**Location:** Mauritania

**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity  
Building, Conservation

ARC-WH together with IUCN Mauritania, the IUCN World Heritage programme office for Central and Western Africa, and the Mauritanian Directorate of Heritage Conservation, organized two activities between 24-29 of November in Nouakchott and the new headquarters of the World Heritage site of Banc d’Arguin National Park in Chami, Mauritania.

The first activity, held in Nouakchott, was a training workshop for a national committee of representatives responsible for the protection of cultural and natural heritage and the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. This training aimed towards enhancing the capacity of the Mauritanian stakeholders by examining the procedures for the implementation of the Convention, the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the natural World Heritage site of Banc d’Arguin in Mauritania, and the World Heritage nomination process.



A VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE  
ECOTOURISM IN THE AHWAR IN  
SOUTHERN IRAQ

**Date:** 7 December 2017

**Location:** Baghdad, Iraq

**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Capacity  
Building, Communication,  
Conservation

The second activity took place at the Headquarters of the Banc d’Arguin National Park in Chami, and consisted of the State of Conservation (SoC) report preparation process for the Banc d’Arguin World Heritage site which will be presented during the upcoming 42nd World Heritage Committee meeting, which will take place in Manama, Bahrain.

The World Heritage site of the Ahwar of southern Iraq is a mix of seven components, four of which are wetland areas that sustain diverse and delicate ecosystems. A conference was organized by the Ministry of Culture of Iraq and representatives from local governments of Basra, Thi-Qar and Misan, to discuss the development of cultural and eco-tourism opportunities in the Ahwar to encourage communal participation and reduce pressures on the natural resources of the area.

ARC-WH highlighted the distribution of the Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) attributes of four natural areas of the World Heritage site. ARC-WH also informed the participants of the standards of tourism adopted by the World Heritage Convention, and presented case studies to further illustrate the current and potential impacts and pressures of eco-tourism upon the natural components of the Ahwar.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR WADI  
RUM AND PETRA

**Date:** 1-11 December 2017

**Location:** Wadi Rum and Petra,  
Jordan

**Leading Programme:** Nature  
**Strategic Objective:** Community,  
Conservation, Capacity Building

ARC-WH visited two of Jordan’s World Heritage sites – Wadi Rum and Petra – to meet with site management teams, government representatives and other stakeholders with the aim of assessing the needs and implementation of the World Heritage Convention in these sites.

Field visits to several sites of both properties enabled the team to evaluate the current status of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the sites.

The team will prepare a detailed report for the State Part of Jordan of the needs for both sites, including conservation, human resources, and legal and institutional concerns.



# 22

WORLD HERITAGE SITES  
IN DANGER IN  
THE ARAB REGION

# 28

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
WORLD HERITAGE SITES  
INSCRIBED IN 2017



## TURNING THE TIDE: FIVE YEARS FORWARD

Following the decision made by UNESCO's Executive Board, the agreement between the Kingdom of Bahrain and UNESCO has been renewed. As a Category 2 Centre (C2C), ARC-WH will continue to consult Arab States Parties in the implementation of the Convention, and assist UNESCO with its strategic programme objectives. To ensure the safeguarding of Arab heritage, ARC-WH is taking calculated steps towards increasing its impact across the region.



Ancient Ksour of Ouadane, Chinguetti, Tichitt and Oualata, Mauritania  
© Editions Gelbart



### EVALUATION OF THE ARAB REGIONAL CENTRE FOR WORLD HERITAGE

April 2017

Six years have passed since the corresponding agreement between UNESCO and the Kingdom of Bahrain was signed on 5 February 2010 (it came into force on 23 December 2011), thereby establishing the Arab Region Centre for World Heritage for a six-year period.

In the spring 2017, UNESCO evaluated the Centre's mandate, impact, performance and contribution to UNESCO's Strategic Objectives and Comprehensive Strategy for the Category 2 Institutes and Centres. The evaluation which was presented to UNESCO executive committee, concluded that ARC-WH continues to be a key partner, effectively assisting Arab States in the understanding and implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

### DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN — PLANNING WORKSHOP

Date: 22 –26 October 2017

Location: Manama, Bahrain

Leading Programme: ARC-WH

Programme

Strategic Objective: Capacity Building, Communication, Community, Credibility, Conservation

Following the evaluation and renewal of ARC-WH conducted by UNESCO, the Centre initiated a strategic plan to revise its former Draft Strategy (2014-2019) to achieve a better sense of direction with regard to its mandate and its responsibilities as the facilitator of the World Heritage Convention in the region.

In order to develop the Centre's strategic plan and set a course for the upcoming five years, ARC-WH held a Development of Strategic Plan — Planning Workshop at its headquarters located in Manama, Bahrain from 23-25 October 2017.

Key partners and experts in the fields of natural and cultural heritage were invited to assist ARC-WH as it reoriented its mandate for the long term, and ascertained what steps it needs to take in order to achieve its envisioned goals.

The workshop invited participants to examine the Centre's current role and effectiveness, assess its mandate and mission, and identify which areas needed to be refined and made clearer to establish a comprehensive strategy. The workshop provided an opportunity for reexamination, and assisted ARC-WH in determining its objectives and strategy for the next five years.



TURNING  
THE TIDE:  
FIVE YEARS  
FORWARD

DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL  
HERITAGE PROGRAMME

**Date:** 13-14 December 2017

**Location:** Manama, Bahrain

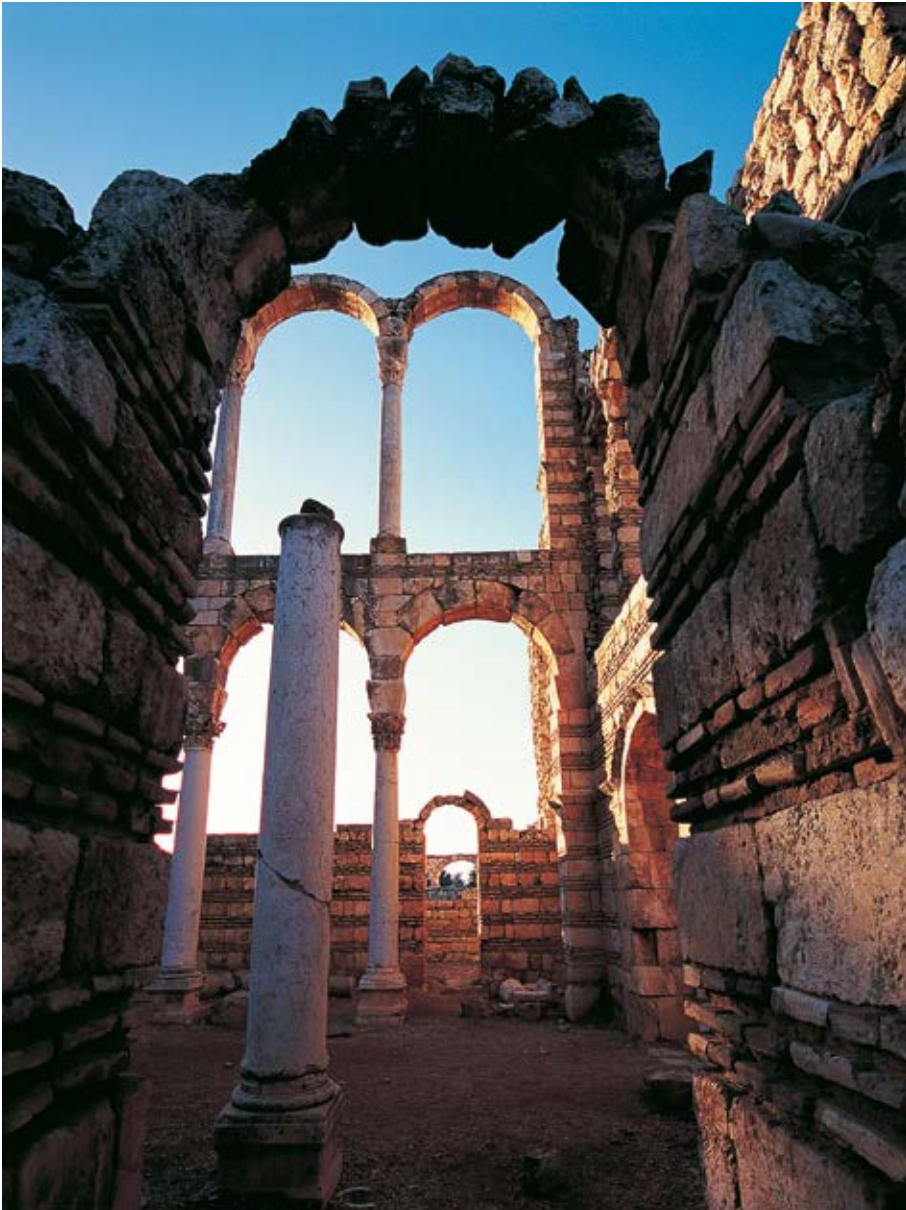
**Leading Programme:** Culture

**Strategic Objective:** Capacity  
Building, Communication

With the initial step completed in October during the Development of Strategic Plan — Planning Workshop, it was time for ARC-WH to develop its Cultural Heritage Programme (2018–2023). From 13-14 December 2017, participants were invited to join ARC-WH to gather vital input as it initiated the next step for its strategic plan.

During the Development of Cultural Heritage Programme-Planning Meeting, participants identified potential interventions and results necessary for the Centre to achieve the programme’s medium and long-term goals. Participants discussed particular challenges faced by the Centre, including conflict and political instability in the region, and conservation and development.

Similar to the ARC-WH strategic planning workshop, the meetings offered a more detailed and concrete framework, specifying how the Centre can transform its strategic objectives into tangible results and interventions.



EPILOGUE

The year 2017 was a period of exceptional change and milestones for the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage.

In accordance with the Agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Bahrain, under Article XXI, the duration of the Centre would be valid for a total of six years. And as the sixth year came to an end, the renewal of the Centre was initiated successfully, thereby establishing another six years for the Centre.

As the Centre enters the next phase of its existence in the Arab region, the development of a new Strategic Plan has been undertaken to increase the Centre’s capabilities as an agency to reinforce the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, thereby bolstering the organization’s achievement of its mandate, mission, function and objectives. With the challenges faced by the Arab region, this step was especially crucial.

Alongside the development of the Strategic Plan, the Centre also developed a Cultural Heritage Programme providing the framework for a more concrete programme that would further assist Arab Member States in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention along with its processes, concepts and rules.

ARC-WH engaged in a number of coordination meetings, workshops, technical training—some held on the premises of the Centre and others in

various Arab countries— that brought together and educated stakeholders and Member States in the implementation and processes of the Convention.

New partnerships and fundraising activities were established in 2017 to reinforce the bridges of the Centre’s external relations, and increase its influence across the region and beyond, enabling the exchange and sharing of information with entities that wish to contribute to the fostering of cultural and natural heritage.

The Centre also engaged with local communities both in Bahrain and across the region. It provided electricity and light to the Island of Samha in Socotra, and saved the lives of fishermen who might otherwise be lost in the darkness at sea.

During the 41st World Heritage Convention, Hebron/Al- Khalil Old Town, located in Palestine, was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. ARC-WH has worked tirelessly this year to increase the representation and capacity of Arab States Members to ensure that inscribed or potential sites are continuously monitored and managed correctly. It is the Centre’s desire that more sites located in the Arab region will become inscribed, and that the representation of this extraordinarily heritage-rich region is increased.

In keeping with the spirit of change and renewal, ARC-WH established a new brand strategy and concept, and initiated

the design and launch of its new website, which is expected to be completed in early 2018. Providing an Arabic language website (including English and French) is part of its main functions, thereby providing accessible information relating to the World Heritage Convention to its Member States of the Arab region as a key tool in increasing their knowledge of the implementation and processes, policies and concepts of the Convention.

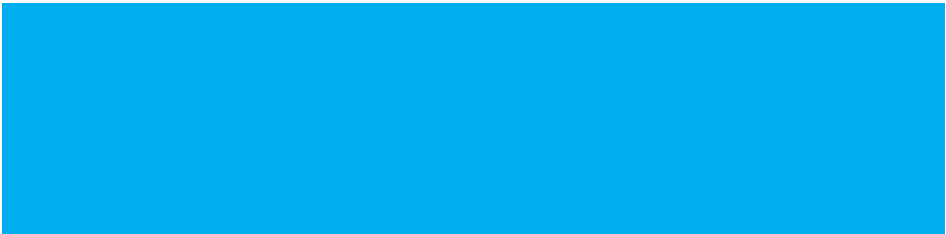
The website facilitates the sharing of information between the Centre and Arab States, as well as national and international stakeholders, experts, universities and education programmes, to catalyze the sharing of vital information. Website visitors will have access to original publications, translated publications, essential documents and information regarding relevant conservation programmes and activities. The website, brand development and social media outlets have expedited the achievement of the Centre’s ongoing aspiration to increase its outreach and visibility for the benefit of the region.

It is the Centre’s wish that the tide of change continues to turn, enhancing ARC-WH’s capability as a Category 2 Centre charged with responsibility for the region’s rich cultural and natural heritage, where some of the earliest civilizations came to be, leaving their stories behind as relics to be cherished today, and hopefully for many generations to come.

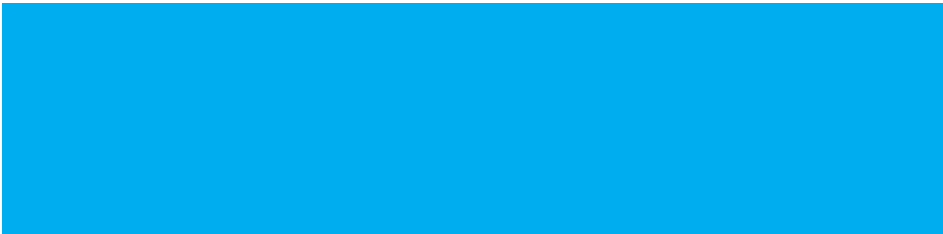
**ARC-WH 2017.**



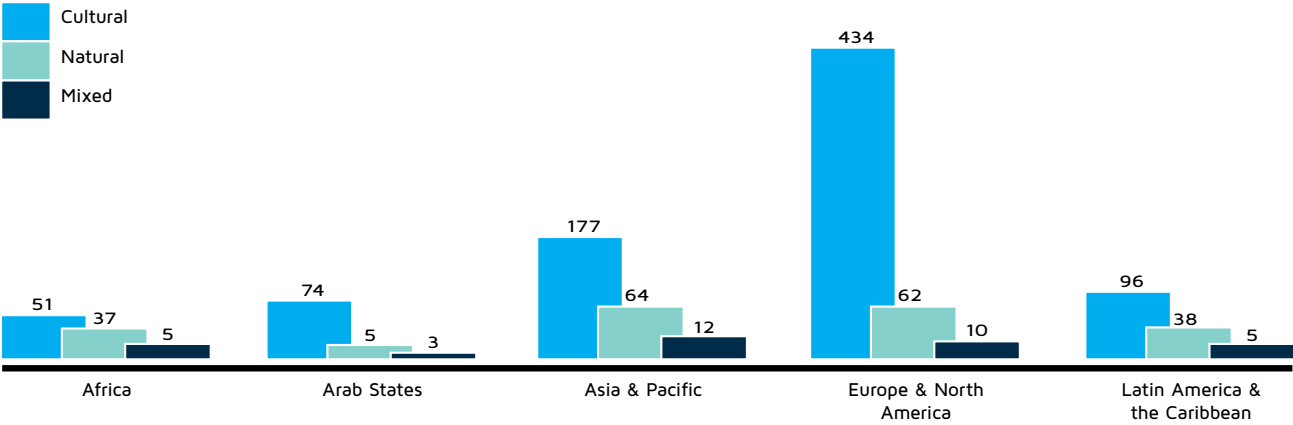
# STATISTICS AND FIGURES



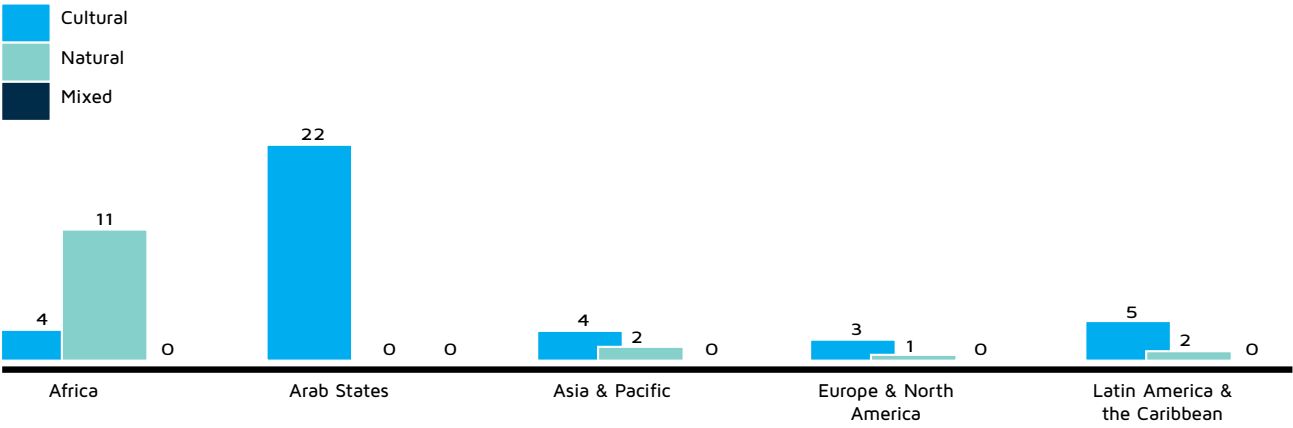
# MAIN PARTNERS



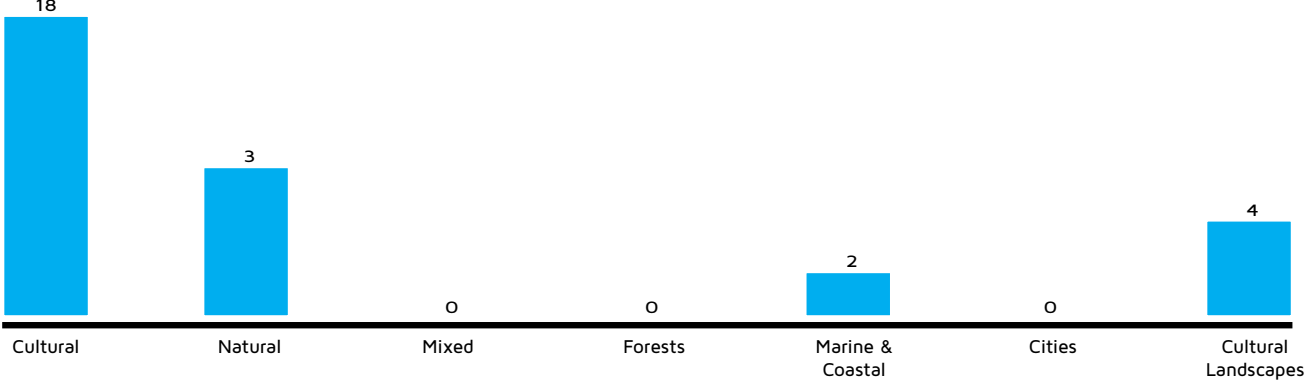
NUMBER OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES BY REGION



LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN DANGER BY REGION



WORLD HERITAGE SITES INSCRIBED IN 2017



UNESCO/ World Heritage Centre



African World Heritage Fund



International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property



International Council of monuments and sites



Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities



International Union for Conservation of Nature



